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AUTHOR Gwinn, Yolanda; Williams, Doris K.
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 INSTITUTION Bowling Green State Univ., Ohio. Career and Technology Education Graduate Faculty.
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ABSTRACT

While federal legislation has opened doors to non-traditional career opportunities, many women are still training to become teachers, secretaries, and nurses. The most basic influence in socializing young girls into strictly feminine roles is the parental attitudes. Sex-associated roles, role limitations, and male-created barriers are constraints to women's ability to choose other careers. The University of Chicago Women's Report suggests that women face sexual discrimination, have difficulty gaining admittance to graduate school, and receive fewer fellowships than men. These factors are magnified when women choose non-traditional paths. In this culture, women's earnings are at the lower end of the pay scale. What can be done to alleviate the inequity of career choices for women? First, the effects of socialization may be counteracted by providing young girls education relative to career opportunities. Secondly, it may be necessary for counselors and teachers to rethink their attitudes toward sex-role behavior. Thirdly, counselors can help alleviate the perpetuation of sexual stereotyping in career choices. Fourth, formal curriculum may be easier to change if the needs of women are kept in mind. While promoting these solutions, we must begin by focusing on programs aimed at assessing the full impact of social institutions and attitudes on the development of sex-associated roles. (EH)

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WOMEN, EQUITY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

By

Yolanda Gwinn, Graduate Assistant
Career and Technology Education

And

Doris K. Williams, Ph.D.
Associate Professor in Home Economics
and Coordinator of the CTE Graduate Program

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, women have been systematically forced into the traditional lifetime roles of wife, mother, and homemaker. And the majority of women who enter the work force enter into routine, nonstatus, low-paying jobs. Seventy-five per cent of all working women are employed as sales clerks, domestics, factory, clerical and service workers (Smith and Borgers, 1974, pp. 122-127). Over half of all high school girls are enrolled in vocational home economics, and another third are pursuing office skills (Zuercher, 1975, pp. 118-122). It appears that subjects such as chemistry and physics are obviously being bypassed, and consequently, women are unprepared for careers in the physical sciences, technologies, and engineering. It is believed that few are pursuing industrial or technical skills. In essence, while federal legislation has opened doors to nontraditional career opportunities, multitudes of women are still training to become teachers, secretaries and nurses. Although giant strides have been made in women's equality, there is much reluctance, by males and females alike to abandon attitudes concerning women and non-traditional occupational roles, even though these attitudes may be obsolete. As late as November 1978, Howard Hayghe, Bureau of Labor Statistics, explained that women tend to be concentrated in lower-paying, clerical service jobs and that movement of women into male dominated occupations has tended to be very slow. (Goodman, 1978, p. 2).

Sociologists speculate that the critical variables affecting our views include the sex role behavior biases toward which we have been conditioned (Penn and Gabriel, 1976, pp. 252-256). Biological scientists have examined and reversed conditioning theory by proving that no genetic traits predispose members of either sex to adopt specific behavior patterns (Penn and Gabriel,

1976). The major culprit is a society which dictates that young women should study home related subjects and not seriously prepare for lifetime occupations.

Vocational and technical school enrollments report that men dominate the disciplines of agriculture, technology, trades and industry. Women dominate health, consumer homemaking, occupational home economics and office education programs. Title II of the Educational Amendment of 1976 has financially paved the way to encourage both men and women to enter non-traditional careers. The twofold purpose of Title II is:

to keep up with rapid changes in the technological society and provide program authority and requirements for the removal of sex bias from vocational education programs.

In addition, Title II has summoned vocational and technical teachers, counselors, administrators and other leaders to provide equal access to programs by both men and women. Clearly one of our social needs relative to non-traditional career choices is to refurbish attitudes of women and their contributions to these roles.

Background

In 1884, Mrs. M.L. Rayne published the first book that focused solely on the career development of women. The purpose of the book was to help every woman, professional or homemaker, feel pride in her labor and achievements (Hobenshil, 1974, iii).

Mrs. Rayne was an early advocate of equality and suggested young girls become educated to stand beside their brothers in the business world (Hobenshil, 1974, 13). Once she was asked whether there were any positions available, besides that of teacher, where women could earn more than \$800 a year, because as a rule women received twenty to thirty percent less than males for the same service (Hobenshil, 1974, 19). Mrs. Rayne responded with the suggestion that there were no other opportunities available, the job situation was hopeless, men have erected these barriers and for good reasons, and women will always be thought of as homemakers

and men as breadwinners. Mrs. Rayne suggests in this 1884 document that single women were grateful for employment and would graciously work for half the pay of men because most of them lived at home perhaps helping to support a relative. However, she predicted that there would be a time coming when women would not work for others but would of necessity work for themselves and their dependents.

Comparing these views of yesteryear with knowledge of women's employment today truly suggest that women have indeed progressed tremendously. Equal rights and affirmative action have allowed us to stand beside our brothers, but yet full equality has not been gained. Progress has been made since 1884, but segregation by sex has undergone little change from the 50's to 70's. The barriers between women, career choices and opportunities are still astronomical.

Cultural Barriers

The ideas Mrs. Rayne preached over ninety years ago are still prevalent today. The most basic and obvious influence in socializing young girls into strictly feminine roles is the parental attitudes. Little girls are encouraged to play house and other "feminine" roles by reinforcing that activity with praise, recognition, pecuniary rewards and financial support. When girls do wish to enter non-traditional roles, negative reinforcement is often a result (Penn and Gabriel, 1976).

These definitions of femininity and masculinity are embedded into the youth's psyche by peers, family members, and educators. As kindergarten students, little girls are sent to the housekeeping corner and little boys to the work bench. Throughout high school, sexual segregation is practiced by teaching boys acceptable masculine behavior and girls feminine behavior. Of

course, the textbook breeds sexual stereotypes portraying women in strictly feminine roles, such as nurse, and never as doctor or mechanic (Ohio Schools, 1972, 9).

Society, in general, is male dominated and ruled. Enrollment in schools of law and medicine further demonstrate these factors. Sex associated roles, role limitations, and male-created barriers are all identified as constraints to women and their ability to choose other careers. Even the establishment of family relationships is thought to be impossible where non-traditional careers are assumed by the female mate (Penn and Gabriel, 1976).

Women's Educational Involvement

The University of Chicago Women's Report suggests that women face sexual discrimination, have more difficulty in gaining admittance to graduate school, and receive proportionately less fellowships. These factors are magnified when women choose non-traditional paths (Smith and Borgers, 1974).

While women have been active in guidance and counseling, receiving over 50% of the master's degrees and 22% of the doctoral degree, over a 50 year history, only two women have served as national president of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (Smith and Borgers, 1974). Their representation on committees and editorial boards and as journal editors is limited despite the fact that 10,762 or 48% of the total 22,421 members are female (Smith and Borgers, 1974).

Women are scarce in leadership roles, especially in public schools. Over a span of 16 years the number of women principals in elementary and junior high schools has dropped to less than half the original number. Female senior high principals have dropped by only 33%. In 1974, there were approximately 13,000 superintendents nationwide, with only three being female (Smith and Borgers, 1974).

Financial Barriers

In this culture, women's earnings are at the lower end of the pay scale because of the contrasting role expectancies. As young men go through school, they are taught to believe that they will sporadically enter and leave the job market after marriage and childbirth. Time and social change have proven both ideas as not always true.

Even with affirmative action programs, female university instructors were paid less than men by a national average of \$3,458. Even though women instructors receive \$57 to \$1,550 more during their second and third year teaching, the national average of women's earnings is still from 22 to 33 percent less than her male counterpart (Smith and Borgers, 1974).

While 80% of professional librarians are women who have on the average of a half year or better schooling than their male counterparts, male librarians earn average incomes of \$8,062 and women only earn \$5,843, a discrepancy of some 27% (Chapman, 1974).

Male nurses or dietitians make up approximately 5% of the total population in the profession. Their income exceeds the female nurses by \$2,700. One may guess that perhaps the male nurse has received more training, but this is not the case, since women lead in training by 7/10 of one year (Chapman, 1974). Recent Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that women earned, with full time jobs, about \$5,000 less than male workers during 1975. The medium income of women was only \$7,531, compared to \$12,770 for men (Goodman, 1978).

Recommendations for Change

What, then, can really be done to help alleviate the inequity of career choices for women? What practical ways can women be encouraged to select non-traditional career appointments?

Trying to convince men and women to enroll in what currently are described as nontraditional vocational and technical programs is clearly not an easy or short-range task. One choice is education relative to career opportunities. If this occurs at a young age, perhaps the effects of socialization may be counteracted. Women may then want to enroll in technical and industrial programs, while men may choose nursing and secretarial jobs. With a society built on technology, we can only profit from these changes.

Secondly, counselors' and teachers' viewpoints can be crucial influences. It may be necessary for counselors and teachers to rethink values and attitudes toward sex role behavior. Only after this is done can the hidden feminine and masculine curriculum be unveiled. Awareness raised in the teachers may be done with group seminars within the individual school faculties. Strengths and weaknesses should be noted and then strategies established to combat them.

Thirdly, counselors can help alleviate the perpetuation of sexual stereotyping in career choices. Young girls should be provided with alternatives to traditional roles. The use of female role models in male dominated professions may give insight to change (Harris, 1974). Field trips and interviews in varied occupational settings may aid young girls to see that jobs are not limited to one sex (Harris, 1974). One research project has proven that six 20 minute sessions on career opportunities can be beneficial in permitting career awareness changes in young girls (Harris, 1974).

Fourth, formal curriculum may be easier to change if the needs of women are kept in mind. Initial efforts must begin by offering access to all areas of study to men and women equally. Legally, Title IX prohibits sexual discrimination and promotes sexual equality in education. Sexual biases in textbooks should be further guarded against by periodic reviews of such materials. Develop criteria for future textbook references that will ultimately aid the promotion of equality

among sexes. And last, but not least, efforts in search of answers to the varied problem areas must continue. The use of supplementary materials to add women and their contributions through visual aids and the like is invaluable. Let us study the disciplines, history, psychology and the like, as they relate to women. Make it known that there are no differences in cognitive development or creativity (Zuersher, 1975-76).

Conclusion

The time is ripe for women to enter engineering, electronics, and agriculture. After all, they comprise the bulk of the buying market for which engineers have designed. Moreover, women in nontraditional careers may use their talents to earn a living in this society, taking one giant step toward obtaining equal pay.

While promoting these solutions, we must begin by focusing on programs aimed at assessing the full impact of social institutions and attitudes on the development of sex associated roles. The stage should now be set to formulate and implement redefining of sex roles. We must realize that sexual biases are a result of tradition and age-old myths (Penn and Gabriel, 1976). Women are human with few innate psychological differences from men.

Viewing Mrs. Rayne's book of some 90 years ago, one may think "You've come a long way baby" (Hobenshil, 1974). Our contemporary attitudes of women and careers only indicate "We've got a long way to go." We, as professionals, must continue to research the methodologies whereby the solutions may be implemented.

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